

# New Process to Cut Pollution at VAAP

NFP 7-27-69 By BOB POE  
News-Free Press Political Writer

Approval of three continuous process lines for the production of TNT at the Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant near Tyner is expected to be announced soon by the U.S. Defense Department, the News-Free Press learned Saturday.

The modernization process will "bring about a 98 per cent reduction in the air and water pollution from the plant," according to the report. It will also save taxpayers \$26 million annually in the cost of TNT production.

VAAP produces 40 per cent of the Free World's TNT and government records indicate the sprawling complex operates more efficiently than any other plant supervised by the Army.

Ranking government officials said recently the other lines will be added at a later date, making VAAP a permanent operation rather than a temporary one. The three proposed lines, when in full operation, are expected to produce more than the ten conventional batch units which reportedly are responsible for the heavy pollution in the area.

The plant, labeled last March in a U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare report as "the worst single federal source of air pollution" in the United States, is the subject of a proposed hearing here by the Senate Committee on Air Pollution, headed by Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, D-Maine.

A more recent HEW report warned parents living in the area of the distinct possibility of respiratory ailments of their children who breathe the pollutants. Other health hazards were also mentioned.

Indications of the long-awaited announcement came last week following visits by top Defense Department officials to the plant, operated by private contractor Atlas Chemical Corp. Among those present was Gen. Stanwix-Hey, deputy secretary of defense.

## DATE NOT CONFIRMED

Confirmation of the date of the announcement of the modernization from Defense Department, Army or VAAP officials could not be obtained Saturday. Reportedly, offices of officials were closed.

The pollution problem at VAAP was the subject of a hearing in the nation's capital three months ago during which time Congressman Bill Brock told Army generals responsible for the TNT production "to fish or cut bait."

He said there has been "tremendous restraint which both the political leaders and the people of Chattanooga have exercised with regard to our growing frustration over the lack of action to achieve modernization and thereby eliminate our pollution problem."

Rep. Brock labeled the residents of the area most affected by pollution "the most patriotic folks in America."

Joining the congressman at the table were U.S. Sen. Howard Baker, State Sen. LaMar Baker and State Rep. Ray Albright.

Rep. Albright told the lineup of 13 generals and ranking civilian employees, "the people who have given the most, suffered the longest, had received the least relief from the air pollution."

Rep. Brock concluded the day-long conference by telling the Army to substitute its three-year-old promises for definite position or face severe action by a quizzing congressional subcommittee, which the Army said it doesn't want.

More than two years ago, Nori Hamilton, plant manager at VAAP, presented to the Army the Canadian Industrials Ltd. plan for continued process for the manufacture of TNT at the Tyner plant. The installation would eliminate almost all of the pollution, the plan said.

## FULL MODERNIZATION

Rep. Brock and U.S. Sen. Baker began pushing at that time for complete modernization of the local plant under the CIL concept.

To test the new system, the Army built a plant at a site near Radford, Va., and programmed Volunteer for complete modernization just as soon as the effectiveness of the plants which produce less TNT than VAAP.

Until less than three months ago, the Army had not submitted any definite plans for the installation of the new process, according to a top government official.

Rep. Brock has said on several occasions that Atlas has taken the lead in drawing up and implementing various modernization plans, but that Atlas has gone as far as it can without federal cooperation.

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